

Eagles Power Past Explorers In Season-Opener

by Nathan Tucker, Sports Reporter
August 26 2023 1:27 AM





ALTON - The high school football season officially kicked off in Alton on Friday with Marquette Catholic hosting Civic Memorial at Public School Stadium. On a hot evening that saw tempers flare and players cramp in numbers, the Eagles outlasted the Explorers, 42-16.

Marquette would score the first points in this one, a first-quarter field goal, before CM answered back with a Jacob Flowers touchdown run from six yards out. Perhaps the jitters of the first game of a new season, especially for two teams with young rosters, but the first quarter, and much of the game, was dictated by penalties by both sides.

“A lot of these guys, it’s only their second year playing, some it's only their first,” said Marquette head coach Eric Dickerson. “I thought they did a tremendous job fighting and working together.”

Marquette would reclaim the lead in the second quarter, Jack Rea and Duarell Blocker connecting to take the score to 10-7. This lead was quite short-lived, as the Eagles would return the ensuing kickoff for a touchdown, reclaiming the lead, 14-10.

After the score, CM went for an onside kick, which became a recurring theme throughout the night as the visiting Eagles looked to build a comfortable lead on the Explorers. They didn't recover, but Marquette was unable to turn a slightly shorter field into points.

Civic Memorial added another touchdown before the halftime break with a Parker Parnell score, giving the Eagles a double-digit, 21-10 lead heading into a halftime break that was needed on a hot and humid opening Friday of football season.

The week's massive heat wave in the area, and much of the Midwest for that matter, has taken a toll on all high school sports. Like many other football games Friday night, Marquette and CM pushed the game back an hour.

It was still above 90 degrees with a heat index in the 100s at the kickoff. Marquette running back Alex McCloud, who missed time in the game due to cramping, noted that the heat played a major factor in Friday night's contest, especially late.

The second half started with a shoving match that saw coaches come onto the field to try to separate their players. Maybe you chalk it up to the heat getting players fired up, but this game had a chippy edge at times, boiling over after the start of the second half.



It took a few minutes for things to settle down after pleasantries were exchanged after the kick, but CM put up two scores in the third quarter, which propelled the Eagles to a 34-10 lead.

“We stall out, and they put up two touchdowns,” said Eric Dickerson of the third quarter. “That third quarter took us out of the game.”

The Eagles brought in Tanner Kokamp at QB in the fourth quarter, and he would find Christian Garrett in the end zone to stretch the CM lead, 42-10 at the time.

Marquette found the endzone late thanks to Alex McCloud’s 16-yard scamper for six. Six is all they would score, missing the extra point, pushing the score to 42-16, the eventual final.

The Eagles start the season on the right foot, and it’s win number 99 for head coach Rick Reinhart at CM. The Eagles head to East Alton-Wood River next Friday to take on the Oilers.

Marquette drops their season opener, meaning the Explorer football winless streak continues at 21 games. They hit the road to take on Salem next Friday night.

“We’re learning a lot, you know?” said Dickerson of his young Marquette team after the defeat.

“This is a start, they had the determination and the look. Good things are happening.”

